

# **The Scuttlebutt Chronicles**

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## **VSO Quarterly Newsletter**

**Volume No. 5, January, February, March 2020**

# Message from the VSO: Army Veteran, Celestina Traver M.A.



As I look back on 2019, I am amazed at all the goals we have met. We have upgraded our grounds with red, white and blue blooming bushes and added flowers. We added a fresh coat of paint to our monument and seating area. Our lobby also has gone through some upgrade with new seating, privacy blinds for the large window and we started fresh coffee and Danish's in the mornings. Our TV is a nice touch to pass the time while waiting to see your Vet Rep. Our staff is growing. We have 2 new VSR's; Tyler and Nora. They are currently being trained and will be serving veterans shortly. Our office has not one but two office assistants to greet and serve you as you walk in. We also started this newsletter which seems to be a great hit in our community. As we go through our last 3 months for this year, I want to shout out a big THANK YOU to all our supporters in the community, stakeholders and other Shasta County Departments that help up make our VSO successful. As you can see on our stats page, we have been very busy filing and winning claims. Our office has a great team that all work together for the common goal of getting our veterans their benefits. I wish everyone a great holiday season and Happy New Year. Cheers to an even better 2020!



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# Veteran Status on Drivers License

To apply for the veteran designation on your DL/ID card, you will need to:

1. Bring your **ORIGINAL** or **CERTIFIED** Copy of your DD214, DD256, DD257 or NGB 22 to the Shasta County Veterans Services Office.

(If you do not have the original or a certified copy, our office will be happy to assist you in ordering it! Please come to our front desk and ask. The certified copy of your discharge paperwork will be sent directly to your home for your convenience)

2. You will sit with one of our Accredited Veteran Representatives.

**This form is not available from DMV.**

3. Bring the completed VSD-001 to a DMV field office. For faster service, make sure to make an appointment to visit a DMV field office.

4. As usual, pay the nonrefundable DMV application fee- at DMV only.

5. Pay an additional \$5 fee to add the veteran designation to your DL/ID card.

Once all requirements have been met, a DL/ID card with the word "VETERAN" will be issued.

**The Shasta County Veterans Services Office has a local listing of businesses, restaurants, and other services that offer discounts to honor our Veterans in the community!**



# Community Connections

## 10 WAYS TO HELP SENIORS THIS WINTER

Although the holiday season can be a happy and joyous time for most of us, many older adults and seniors find the season hectic, confusing and even depressing depending on their mental, physical and emotional conditions. The good news is that we can all help contribute to a happier season for the older adults and seniors in our lives by doing the following:

1. **Explore old memories.** Older adults and seniors love to share happy, humorous, and light-hearted memories. It can also be a wonderful way for them to interact with the “younger crowd” at a family event since many young people love to hear “what it was like when they were my age”.
2. **Plan.** Anticipate the fact that the elders in your family may need a break from all the commotion and loud noise. Keep an eye on them, and escort them to a quiet room where they can relax for a little while and perhaps have a one-on-one conversation with a single member of the family.
3. **De-clutter.** Remove unnecessary clutter items which could prove to be obstacles and even potentially dangerous if someone were to trip and fall.
4. **Be thoughtful.** Many older adults experience memory loss, so keep this in mind when you’re telling stories or rehashing events from the past. If it appears as though a senior family member does not remember, don’t make a point of singling him or her out in the crowd.
5. **Spend quality time with the elders in your life.** There is a lot to learn from them, and they will appreciate the time you spend with them. Perhaps go for a winter drive into old neighborhoods, or go window shopping to see the festive displays.
6. **Include everyone.** Seniors like to feel useful and needed. Even elders with physical limitations can be given a simple task to help out with meal preparation such as greasing a cooking pan, peeling vegetables, placing napkins on the table, and so on.
7. **Extend invitations.** For those of us who have seniors or older adults who are alone, invite them over for a meal. Keep them included in your life and make them feel Connected ALL YEAR.
8. **Fight the downside.** Even though you may not be aware of it, depression in elders is very common and is increasing in prevalence. Furthermore, feelings of depression are even more common during the winter months. If you feel as though an elderly family member or friend may be feeling depressed this season, spend time with him or her, and don’t ignore any inclinations you may have about their unhappiness.
9. **Be in the light.** Many people suffer from Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), which is a depressive illness provoked by reductions in sunlight. Find ways to participate in outdoor activities to take in the natural winter sunlight whenever you can.
10. **Help elders in your life** by monitoring their medication intake and alcohol consumption. During the hectic holiday season, and beyond, it can be easy for seniors to forget to take their medications or to become wrapped up and drink a little too much. Look out for their best interests at all times.

# SHASTACONNECT

**<https://www.shastacconnect.org/sunday-transit/>**

ShastaConnect Sunday Transit is completely free\*, completely on-demand (by phone, web, or app), comes directly to your starting address and takes you to your exact destination. No need to walk to a pre-determined stop or wait for your ride in the heat, cold, or rain. We even offer door-to-door assistance by request. Sundays from 6:30 AM to 7:30 PM.

*\*Free fares will be offered for the first 24 months of this pilot program due to a grant from the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP).*

## Here's How It Works

Similar to Uber or Lyft, ShastaConnect's Sunday Transit service is available on demand. Book a trip by phone, mobile app, or on this website, get matched with a vehicle going your way, and get to your exact destination. Multiple people heading in the same direction will share their ride on one of our vans or buses. Service hours are from 6:30 AM to 7:30 PM, every Sunday (excluding some holidays).

## Book a Trip in 4 Easy Steps

### Step 1:

Set up an account – there are 3 simple ways:

1. Click here to create an account online

-or-

2. Download the app to create an account from you smart phone



Call ShastaConnect Support line at 530-226-3075

If you are requesting a ride- please have the following

- Your name
- Contact phone number
- Address where we are picking you up
- Address where we are dropping you off
- Desired time of pickup

**\*Please note – ride requests by phone may only be made with a live dispatcher. Thank you.**





U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

## Department of Defense Expanding Access to Military Commissaries, Exchanges and Recreation Facilities

The Department of Defense is expanding commissary, military exchange, and morale, welfare, and recreation (MWR) retail privileges on U.S. military installations as specified in the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018, included in the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019.

**Starting Jan. 1, 2020**, access will expand to include all veterans with service-connected disabilities, veterans who are Purple Heart recipients, veterans who are former prisoners of war, and individuals approved and designated as the primary family caregivers of eligible veterans under the Department of Veterans Affairs Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers. While this expansion will extend eligibility to over 4.1 million new patrons, the Department expects little to no impact on current patrons in most locations. There may be some impact in areas with a high cost of living, but the Department is preparing to accommodate all new patrons.

"These new privileges recognize the service and sacrifice of these veterans and those that care for them," A.T. Johnston, deputy assistant secretary of defense for Military Community and Family Policy, said. "If you or someone you know might be eligible for these privileges, share the message," Johnston said. "Please help us ensure these veterans and caregivers receive the privileges they've been granted."

New patrons eligible solely under this authority should be aware that the law requires the Defense Department charge them a small user fee to offset the increased expense incurred by the Department of the Treasury for processing commercial credit or debit cards used for purchases at commissary stores.

The Department of Defense is finalizing the details for these new privileges with the Departments of Veterans Affairs, Homeland Security and the Treasury. Information will be announced soon regarding installation access and the authentication process for these privileges.

To learn more about the commissary, military exchange and MWR expansion, visit <https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Factsheets/expanding-access-fact-sheet.pdf>.



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

## Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act claims now being determined....

**WASHINGTON** — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will begin deciding claims for the [Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019](#) at 12:01 a.m., Philippine Standard Time, Jan. 1, 2020. The Philippines is the farthest east VA regional benefits office.

The Act extends the presumption of herbicide exposure, that include toxins such as Agent Orange, to Veterans who served in the offshore waters of the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam War. Signed into law Jun. 25, the law specifically affects Blue Water Navy (BWN) Veterans who served no more than 12 nautical miles offshore of the Republic of Vietnam between Jan. 6, 1962 and May 7, 1975, as well as Veterans who served in the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) between Jan. 1, 1967 and Aug. 31, 1971. These Veterans can now apply for disability compensation and other benefits if they have since developed one of [14 conditions](#) that are presumed to be related to exposure to herbicides. Veterans do not need to prove that they were exposed to herbicides. The specific conditions can be found by searching the term “Agent Orange” on [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov).

“For six months, VA worked diligently to gather and digitize records from the National Archives and Records Administration to support faster claims decisions,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “These efforts will positively impact the claims process for Veterans filing for these benefits.”

To be eligible a Veteran must have served in the identified locations during the specified time period and currently have a [condition\(s\) associated](#) with herbicide exposures, such as Agent Orange. Blue Water Navy claims are being processed under current prioritization criteria; however, special priority is being given to Veterans who are over the age of 85 or have a terminal condition. Qualifying recipients include affected Veterans who are still living and certain survivors of deceased BWN and Korean DMZ Veterans.

Survivors can file claims for benefits based on the Veteran’s service if the Veteran died from at least one of the 14 presumptive conditions associated with herbicides such as Agent Orange. The law also provides benefits for children born with [spina bifida](#) if their parent is or was a Veteran with certain verified service in Thailand during a specific period.

The Act includes provisions impacting the VA Home Loan Program. Veterans have more access to obtain no-down payment home loans, regardless of loan amount, and the home loan funding fee is reduced for eligible Reservists and National Guard borrowers who use their home loan benefits for the first time. VA’s website describes the eligibility of certain Purple Heart recipients who do not have to pay a funding fee as well as [other benefits](#).

Veterans who want to file an initial claim for an herbicide-related disability can use VA [Form 21-526EZ, Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits](#) or work with a VA-recognized [Veterans Service Organization](#) to assist with the application process. Veterans may also contact their [state Veterans Affairs Office](#).

BWN Veterans who previously filed a claim seeking service connection for one of the 14 presumptive conditions that was denied by VA may provide or identify any new and relevant information regarding their claim when reapplying. To re-apply, Veterans may use [VA Form 20-0995, Decision Review Request: Supplemental Claim](#). As a result of the new law, VA will automatically review claims that are currently in the VA review process or under appeal. Visit [Blue Water Navy Veterans benefits](#) for more information or call 1-800-749-8387 for special issues.

# Presidential Changes to Veteran Benefits

**SERVING, SUPPORTING, AND PROTECTING OUR VETERANS: President Donald J. Trump has made it a priority to support the American veterans who courageously protected our country.**

President Trump has worked tirelessly to ensure that our American heroes have the care and support they have earned when they leave the service.

\*In 2018, President Trump signed the largest funding bill for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in history, securing \$86.5 billion for the VA.

\*President Trump signed the VA Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act, making it easier to identify problems within the VA and improve the quality of service for veterans.

\*In an effort to expedite the appeals process for veterans, President Trump signed the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act.

\*President Trump created a 24/7 White House VA Hotline to ensure that our veterans receive immediate attention and aid.

**PROVIDING QUALITY CARE: President Trump continues working tirelessly to improve healthcare quality for veterans and end the tragedy of veteran suicide.**

The President signed the VA MISSION Act, a monumental reform of the VA system that will help provide our veterans with the care and support they deserve. This legislation greatly expands veteran's ability to choose the healthcare that best meets their individual needs.

\*Under the VA Mission Act, Veterans will gain access to care right in their own communities.

\*President Trump signed an Executive Order on the "President's Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End a National Tragedy of Suicide" (PREVENTS Initiative). The order calls on members of the Federal government and the private sector to join efforts in improving veterans' quality of life and identifying veterans in need.

\*Last year, President Trump signed a funding bill that secures \$8.6 billion for veterans' mental health services and \$400 million for opioid use prevention.

**HONORING OUR HEROES AT HOME: President Trump is ensuring that our veterans receive the resources they need to return to civilian life with dignity and security.**

President Trump is making sure that veterans receive the educational benefits they deserve.

\*In 2017, the President signed the "Forever GI Bill," providing veterans access to their veteran educational benefits at any point during their lifetime.

\*President Trump signed a presidential memorandum that makes it easier for totally and permanently disabled veterans to have their Federal student debt eliminated.

\*The Administration has taken action to help boost veterans' employment. Under the Trump Administration, veteran employment reached the lowest level ever recorded.

\*President Trump issued an Executive Order to enhance opportunities for military spouses to find employment within the Federal government.

\*President Trump signed legislation to ensure that veteran benefits will receive the same cost of living adjustment increase as social security.





## **Victim to Victor Story**

**Many of us have a story to tell about how we became the person we present to the world.  
We see you- and we honor you**



### **Fred Loveland**

Fred first applied for Service Connection in 1994. He was initially denied and felt disgusted with the whole process and decided to give up for many years.

In 2012 he came across an organization in Milpitas, California in the form of Veterans helping Veterans where he was persuaded to try again. Thus began the agonizing game of waiting. 6 months, then another 3 months, and doctors appointments. His justification came in the form of a PTSD diagnosis. After receiving his diagnosis he visited a Veterans Center in San Jose California where he filed again. Fred soon found out he had been denied from the VA because the events Fred spoke of *"did not happen."* The devastation and anger he felt was unreal. How could anyone tell him what he experienced was untrue? How could anyone deny his accounts and whereabouts? How could another person be so cruel? Motivated and angry, Fred took it upon himself to do some research on line. He found information on the ships he had served on and their locations. He even contacted, via email, Veterans he had served with- and they graciously offered to write personal accounts & letters regarding certain incidents.

In 2014 Fred relocated to Shasta County. After hearing all that Fred had been through the Shasta County VSO jumped at a chance to right the wrongs Fred had to endure. The Veterans Services Office sent in supplemental evidence, wrote up arguments in his favor, wrote stressor narratives and clarified certain facts regarding his service time. Fred's representative even sent off and retrieved civilian records to add to his evidence. In 2015, the VSO filed a formal appeal to Washington DC. Multiple VSO representatives were monitoring Fred's case closely to make sure nothing was left out. In 2017 the VSO added clarifying information and facts in another stressor narrative and in 2018 reopened a previous denial claim of Fred's. Soon after, the BVA made a decision. 10 days after Fred's exam a large envelope arrived with the decision he was denied so many years earlier! He was 70% Service Connected. The now steady income gave Fred the chance to purchase a house on land with a pool. Fred's Back pay allotted him the ability to purchase and restore his 1934 Ford. As of 2019, Fred is 100% Service Connected.

Fred has since dedicated his life to helping Veterans throughout the North state and beyond. He and his 1934 Ford are staples at almost every Veteran gathering and parade but best known as a focal point in Veteran funeral processions.

When asked for this interview- "What do you want me to make sure other Veterans know?" , Fred's response was- "Tell them to NEVER QUIT!"



# State Controller's Tax Postponement Program

## Property Tax Postponement Program Overview

The State Controller's Office (SCO) administers the Property Tax Postponement (PTP) Program, which allows eligible homeowners to postpone payment of current-year property taxes on their primary residence.

**A postponement of property taxes is a deferment of current-year property taxes that must eventually be repaid. Repayment is secured by a lien against the property. Funding is limited and distributed on a first-come, first-served basis. Due to funding limitations, all who qualify may not be approved.**

## Eligibility Requirements

To qualify, you must meet all of the following criteria for every year in which postponement of property taxes is desired:

- Be at least 62 years of age, or blind, or disabled;
- Own and occupy the real property as your principal place of residence (floating homes and house boats are not eligible);
- Have a total household income of \$35,500 or less;
- Have at least 40 percent equity in the property; and
- Not have a reverse mortgage on the property.

**Applications for the 2019-20 tax year are now available.**

*For additional information about this program,  
please contact the PTP team at :*

**[postponement@sco.ca.gov](mailto:postponement@sco.ca.gov) or 1-800-952-5661.**



# **-2019-** *Year in* **REVIEW**

## **Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day Event**



## **VA Clinic Groundbreaking**



## **VSO on KCNR Monthly**



## **Senior & Veterans Fraud Prevention Fair**



## **Veterans Day Parsons Elementary**



## **U.S Army Birthday Celebration**





# -2019- *Year in* REVIEW

## Mather VRC Veteran Housing Visit

## Shasta College "Welcome Back"



## Mather, VA Hospital Visit



## Post 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony



## Woman's Leadership Summit





# EVENTS

## *January~*

*01/14 VFW Post 1934 Free Veterans Lunch 12:30*  
*01/15 Dine and Donate- Black Bear 4pm-8pm*  
*01/18 Korean War Meeting @ Waffle House 11:30*  
*01/18 Combating Bulling in Education- Shasta College 2pm*  
*01/20 MLK Day- County Holiday-VSO CLOSED*  
*01/20 MLK Jr. Center 1815 Sheridan St 9am-12:30 program*  
*225-4375 or Shasta County Beloved Community*  
*01/22 VSO on Carl Bott- KCNR 1460 AM Radio 8am-9am*

## *February~*

*02/11 VFW Post 1934 Free Veterans Lunch 12:30*  
*02/14 Happy Valentines Day *  
*02/15 Korean War Meeting @ Waffle House 11:30*  
*02/17 Presidents Day-County Holiday- VSO Closed*  
*02/19 VSO on Carl Bott- KCNR 1460 AM Radio 8am-9am*  
*02/24-02/28 CACVSO Accreditation- Office will OPEN for bus*  
*passes, and income verifications ONLY*

## *March~*

*03/04 Shasta County Fraud Fair~10am-1pm Elks Lodge*  
*03/08 Daylight Savings- SPRING Forward 1 HR*  
*03/10 VFW Post 1934 Free Veterans Lunch 12:30*  
*03/16-03/20 Women's Veterans Week*  
*03/17 Saint Patrick's Day *  
*03/25 VSO on Carl Bott- KCNR 1460 AM Radio*  
*03/28 Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans –Vet Hall 10am*  
*03/29 National Vietnam War Day*

# Shasta County Veteran Services Office

Office: 530-225-5616

Fax: 530-245-6464

Visit our webpage for printable checklists.

[vso@co.shasta.ca.us](mailto:vso@co.shasta.ca.us)

**Walk-in only, No Appointments**

## Hours of Operation

**Monday~Friday  
8:30am – 11:30am  
1pm-4pm**

## Address

**1855 Shasta Street  
Redding, CA 96001**



## ***Veterans Serving Veterans***

### **Items to bring with you:**

- **DD-214**
- **Picture ID**

**Remember: if you lost your separation paperwork from the military, regardless of when, we can order it for you.**

### OUR MISSION STATEMENT

TO PROMOTE THE HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELFARE OF LOCAL VETERANS AND THEIR DEPENDENTS BY ADVOCATING ON THEIR BEHALF TO THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND FEDERAL APPEALS COURT IN ORDER TO PROVIDE THEM WITH BENEFITS AND SERVICES TO WHICH THEY MAY BE ENTITLED.